

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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TO: All Design Review Board Members

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**SUBJECT: Brooklyn Basin, Shoreline Park, City of Oakland, Alameda County
(BCDC Permit No. 2006.007.01)
(For Board consideration on February 9, 2015)**

Project Summary

Project Sponsors. Zarsion-Oakland Harbor Partners (Formerly Oakland Harbor Partners, LLC)

Project Representatives. Patrick Van Ness, Signature Development Group; Deborah Tu, Signature Development Group; Boris Dramov, ROMA Design Group; Bonnie Fisher, ROMA Design Group.

Project Site. The Brooklyn Basin development project covers 64 acres of the Oakland waterfront, and is located between the Oakland Estuary and Embarcadero, southeast of Jack London Square, in the City of Oakland, Alameda County. Approximately 17.5 acres of the site are located within BCDC's shoreline band jurisdiction (Exhibits 1 and 2).

This project received four pre-application reviews by the Design Review Board prior to issuance of the permit. The project sponsor, the City of Oakland, and the Port of Oakland received a BCDC permit on February 4, 2011 to redevelop a former maritime/industrial district on the Oakland Estuary into a mixed-use waterfront neighborhood. The new neighborhood will have strong connections to the region, downtown Oakland, Jack London Square, and the adjacent neighborhoods. The primary land use will be residential, however the development includes visitor and neighborhood-serving retail and approximately 30 acres of public open spaces.

The permit authorizing this project requires Design Review Board review of preliminary plans for phased public access areas and contiguous development.

Project Description. This Board review is limited to the area of Shoreline Park (Exhibit 3). As the first park to be implemented within Brooklyn Basin, and the park most closely tied to the industrial heritage of the site, it will create the setting for the nearby development and will set the stage for the park improvements to follow. In the future, the Board will also review other park areas within the development including Estuary Park, Channel Park, South Park, and Gateway Park, as plans for these areas are developed in more detail.

Shoreline Park occupies a site of nearly 10 acres, and, as such, will be the largest park within the assembly of new waterfront open spaces along the Brooklyn Basin waterfront. It extends from the Embarcadero to Clinton Basin and comprises approximately a third of all of the parks and open spaces planned for this emerging mixed-use community. The shoreline adjacent to the park is about a half mile long and, although there are narrower sections, it generally ranges from about 150 to 200 feet in width from Ninth Avenue to the Estuary (Exhibits 3-5).

As originally required in BCDC Permit No. 2006.007.01, Shoreline Park included approximately 345,000 square feet of access, including a public fountain, approximately 40 benches, pedestrian-scale lighting, wharf railings, one Bay Trail directional map, four interpretive/historic markers, and a vertical trail marker. An approximately 24,600 square foot rain garden for stormwater detention is also required. The permit additionally required modest public access improvements along the train trestle located to the northeast of the Ninth Avenue terminal building.

Approximately half of the park will be located on a wharf structure built on concrete and wood pilings, partially over the Bay. The wharf originally served to handle break bulk cargo. Original plans for this park envisioned a flexible open lawn area, however, recent investigations revealed that even after the wharf is structurally reinforced, the extent and depth of the soils for planting would be limited. The entire surface of the wharf would be wood decking, with a grade change sloping up from the street to an elevated platform, which would step down again toward the Bay. The entire space would be ADA-accessible and grade changes would be gradual, reducing the need for railings. A 20,000-square-foot portion of the Ninth Avenue terminal building would be retained, rehabilitated, and used for bay-oriented commercial recreation and public assembly. Uses may include a maritime museum, café, and community center. An area to the northeast and southwest side of the terminal building would be reserved for private outdoor tenant activities, such as outdoor dining, farmers' markets, and vendor booths. Additionally, periodic special events are also proposed for northeastern parking lot and the central shoreline plaza.

Sixty public access parallel parking spaces would be provided along the southern side of Ninth Avenue and 30 additional public access parking spaces would be provided in a small parking lot to the east of the Ninth Avenue Terminal Building.

Design Review Issues. The Board's comments are sought on the proposed public access improvements, and the Board should consider the following applicable policies and guidelines during this initial review. Specifically, the Board's recommendations are sought on the following:

1. **Physical Access:** The Bay Plan policies on Public Access state, in part, that:

"Improvements should be designed and built to encourage diverse Bay-related activities and movement to and along the shoreline..." and that "[a]ccess to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available."

The Public Access Design Guidelines state, in part, that a shoreline development should: "provide a clear and continuous transition to adjacent developments," "use local public street networks to inform shoreline site design and to extend the public realm to the Bay," and "provide connections perpendicular to the shoreline."

Ninth Avenue forms the inland edge of Shoreline Park and provides access to the park from the Embarcadero. The cross section of Ninth Avenue includes two vehicular lanes with parallel parking and sidewalks with street trees on both sides. On the south side of the street adjacent to the park, a separated Class I bicycle trail would provide the most direct access between Clinton Basin and the Embarcadero. An approximately 30-foot-wide promenade for pedestrian/bicycle movement along the shoreline would form the Bay Trail route (Exhibits 2 and 11 show Bay Trail route). The reconstruction of the 20-foot-wide former train trestle, would provide a direct connection to the existing Bay Trail east of the project area.

The Board's advice is sought on whether pedestrian and bicycle connections to and along the shoreline are adequate and appropriately placed. In addition, the Board should evaluate whether the shoreline public access spaces have adequate widths.

2. **Does the project provide adequate, usable, and attractive public access spaces appropriate to the development and the site?** The Bay Plan policies on *Appearance, Design, and Scenic Views* state, in part:

“All bayfront development should be designed to enhance the pleasure of the user or viewer of the Bay. Maximum efforts should be made to provide, enhance, or preserve views of the Bay and shoreline, especially from public areas, [and] from the Bay itself....”

BCDC's *Public Access Design Guidelines* state, in part, that:

“Shoreline access [should be] designed and built to encourage diverse, Bay-related activities along the shoreline... to create a “sense of place,” and be “designed for a wide range of users,” and that “[v]iew opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site's inherent public access opportunities.”

A large plaza southwest of the Ninth Avenue terminal building would include several grade changes and provide views to the Bay. The plaza and a parking lot would occasionally host major and smaller scale special events (Exhibit 12). Remnants of the former maritime and industrial facilities, including structural elements of the Ninth Avenue Terminal served as inspiration for public access seating and structures throughout the park and would be reused where possible (Exhibit 6). The three cross streets, Brooklyn Way, Main Street and Eighth Avenue connect inland development areas to the park as well as the intersection of the Embarcadero, and establish four important view corridors to be maintained through the park to the Estuary (Exhibit 11).

The Board should evaluate whether Shoreline Park provides adequate, usable, and attractive public access spaces appropriate to the development and the site? Are open views to Bay provided for and enhanced? Are the proposed special events areas appropriately placed and sized?